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# Culture and Society

## 1. Culture as a sociological issue

### 1.1. Definitions of culture

This presentation of concepts and definitions of culture is based on the works of famous polish sociologist *Antonina Kłosowska*. The term “culture” itself has a positive connotation in all languages, as well as the adverb “cultural”. The word “culture” derives from the Latin word *colere* – cultivation, used always with an attribute, e.g. “the culture of grapevine” or “the culture of corn”. The first person to use the term in its metaphorical sense was Cicero, who in his *Tusculan Theses* called philosophy the culture of the spiritual life. Culture was identified with harmony, work, value and contrasted with nature associated with chaos and the wild. The culture helped to satisfy human needs to a greater extent. At the same time, the term culture was linked with the term “cult”, that is an activity directed to gods and ancestors. Human nature in philosophy and anthropology is defined by cultural implications; man is the creator and the receiver of culture. Different aspects of this concept were emphasised in numerous theories: human as a social being (Aristotle, Marx), as a “working being” using tools – *homo faber*, as a rational being – *homo sapiens*, as a being capable of symbolising – *homo symbolicus* (Cassirer).

There are two main kinds of definitions of the term “culture”:

- the full/large one, called the “anthropological approach”, according to which all human activities are cultural, in the same sense as art, music, literature, language, customs, religion, food, houses, furniture, weapons etc.;
- the limited one, in which only intellectual, moral and aesthetic aspects of human activity can be called cultural.

The limited definition is more popular with the common people but for the scientific societies the full one is more appropriate. More than hundred definitions of culture were studied by A. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, who presented us with a useful typology of six kinds of definitions of “culture”: enumerative, historical, psychological, genetic, normative, structural.

The first kind, the enumerative definitions, don't meet the needs of scientific usefulness, are inadequate (too shallow), because it's impossible to list all the spheres and elements of culture and furthermore – it is not efficient. As an example, a definition by E. Tylor, an evolutionist, can be presented. His definition combines elements of enumeration with anthropological conclusions: “Culture or civilisation is a complex entirety, encompassing knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morality, customs and all types of other abilities and habits acquired by a member of a society”<sup>1</sup> (Kłoskowska, 1964, p. 21).

Historical definitions characterize culture with the use of key concepts such as tradition, collective output, heritage, accumulation. The issues of diffusion of culture, that is its transmission in time and space were examined by one of the fathers of Polish sociology, *Stefan Czarnowski*, who claims that “Culture is the entirety of objectivised elements of social output of groups of the same rank by virtue of their objectivity, set and capable of spreading”. (Czarnowski, 1956, p. 2). “Objectivisation”, the key term in the definition, means the existence of cultural entity in its material form, available for the receiver. According to this interpretation, the division between material culture and spiritual one seems pointless. Spiritual culture, such as religion, art, music, literature cannot exist without their material carriers such as temples, liturgical objects, paintings, musical scores, records, copies of books. At the same time, material culture such as architecture, tools, various consumer goods cannot come into being without

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations translated by Anna Matuchniak-Krasuska.

spiritual background, such as planning, designing, creating a recipe for a given product. Cultural censorship, both in the time of Inquisition and during Communist regime, was characterized by persecution and destruction of cultural objects such as books (later also copies of movies and other data carriers) as well as prohibition to obtain, possess, read or watch. Indexes of forbidden books allowed the existence of one or few copies in special library magazines closed to public. Anti-communist movies were not permitted for mass distribution and had been lying on the archive shelves for years, gaining a special name of “shelvers” (Polish – *półkownik*).<sup>2</sup>

Psychological definitions concentrate on socialization and aculturation of the individual, that is introducing the individual into culture, its norms, patterns, models, values. Transmission of culture and learning it are matters that border on sociology and psychology. All material elements of culture being the products of humans, and also creations of nature that surround us (mountains, rivers, territories and landscapes) were called “correlatives” of culture by *Stanisław Ossowski*, who reserved defining elements of culture for “attitudes and dispositions towards a definite reaction to correlatives of culture”. Culture had in his view only a spiritual, that is consciousness related dimension, although, obviously, it was accompanied by the already mentioned material correlatives (Ossowski, 1966). Transmission of culture requires at the same time a transfer of the material object: a tool, a work of art, and appropriate attitudes towards those objects. Lack of information about specifications of a lace can cause its negative evaluation as just a fabric full of holes. The history of culture is full of similar examples of an unorthodox evaluation or usage of an object. This problem applies to intergenerational transmission as well as to intercultural diffusion.

Structural definitions, in other words distributive definitions, are devoted to the variety of cultures and the character of each culture on the whole. This approach is typical for the famous anthropological school of Franz Boas, also called “the school of culture and personality”, to which other well – known researchers belonged, e.g. Ruth Benedict (renowned

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<sup>2</sup> It is a pun which has political connotations – “półka” in Polish means “shelf” whereas the word “półkownik” means “colonel”. Although the Polish word for “colonel” is properly spelled as “pułkownik”, both words are pronounced in the same way.

for her book "Patterns of Culture"), Margaret Mead, Ralf Linton, Abram Kardiner. On the basis of arduous field research, these people learnt and described many diverse cultures: Zuni Indians, Kwakiutli, Hopi, Navaho and other islanders of the Pacific (Triobrandy, Samoa), as well as Japanese and Russian culture. These are interesting monographic studies, allowing to formulate generalisations. They point out to the cohesion of diverse formulas within the confines of a given culture, applying to different spheres of life: socialization, family and social relations, art, language, and through that they compare their distinctness of formulas in different cultures. For R. Linton "Culture is a set of learnt behaviours and their consequences, the elements of which are common for members of a given society and are spread within the society" (Kłoskowska, 1964, p. 38). It is also worthwhile to quote the shortest definition from R. Benedict: "Culture is a complex entity comprising habits acquired by humans as members of a society" (Kłoskowska, 1964, p. 22). The multitude of formulas of culture determines the wealth of the whole human culture. These researchers gave arguments to fight ethnocentrism and eurocentrism in order to preserve cultural relativism.

Genetic definitions, as the name itself suggests, deal with the rising of human culture, the process of anthropogenesis expressed in the slogan "from nature to culture". It is not, as in the previous case, about specifications of each culture, but about the genesis of it as a universal phenomenon. Anthropology of culture and philosophy uses the output of archeology, physical anthropology, genetics. Among representatives of this approach were as diverse author as *Bronisław Malinowski*, anthropologist, originator of the practical trend; and Sigmund Freud, originator of psychoanalysis. Within this approach, human needs are a starting point, while cultural (institutionalised) forms of satisfying them are the aim. Freud lists just two elementary human needs situated in the *id* sphere that follow the principle of pleasure: Eros as the constructive drive of love and Tanathos as the destructive drive of death. Culture as a sphere of norms, orders and bans (the first and foremost of which is the taboo of incest) is situated in the sphere of *superego* connected with the sphere of duty. The *ego* sphere, situated between the two already mentioned, obeys the rule of optimisation. Its mediation is not successful, as the title of Freud's book *Culture is the or-*

*igin of suffering* suggests. This pessimistic vision of culture finds its continuity in the neopsychoanalysis of Erich Fromm and Karen Horney who write about “the escape from freedom” and “the neurotic personality of our times”. B. Malinowski presents a more optimistic vision of culture where basic human needs can be satisfied with institutional assistance. The list of primeval needs and cultural reactions is longer and encompasses the following pairs: metabolism – equipment, reproduction – affinity, organism’s needs – shield, the need for safety – protection, the need for movement – activities, the need for growth – teaching, the need for health – hygiene. They are expressed in reference to a community (as above) or an individual. The social need for reproduction would be equalled by the individual sexual need. The obligation of satisfying the primeval needs results in emerging of four kinds of derivative needs and cultural reactions to them. The need for producing tools is equalled by the economy. The need for codification and regulation of human behaviour is equalled by social control. Transmission of culture is carried out by education, and political organisation is responsible for formation of collective action. B. Malinowski does not give a full list of integrative needs linked to symbolic needs and human abilities and built over the former ones. He lists the following cultural reactions to the integrative needs: language, knowledge, magic, religion, art, ethics, morality. He also underlines blending of symbolic systems with direct human actions. In the book *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* not only does he devote himself to analysing farming, but also magic, which is an integral part of garden cultivation. For the people of Triobrandy magic rituals connected with the agricultural production are as essential and practical as digging up the field, seeding and collecting crops. Also art is not an isolated sphere in primeval societies: decorating elements of material culture such as houses, pieces of clothing, tools, dishes leads to formation of a wide category of practical arts which is connected with magic.

A. Kłosowska’s wide anthropological definition of culture is based on Linton’s definition mentioned above. Here is its original, Polish version and an English translation: “Kultura stanowi złożoną całość, w skład której wchodzi zachowania, przebiegające według wspólnych dla zbiorowości społecznej wzorów, przekazywanych i przyswajanych w toku interakcji, oraz zawierająca wytwory tych zachowań” (Kłosowska, 1964, p. 40).

“Culture is a complex entirety consisting of human behaviours that follow common social patterns transmitted and adopted through interaction, and comprising the results of these behaviours”.

Later the same author stated that “culture is a multi-faceted entirety, in which, through analysis, we can distinguish an internalised stratum of norms, formulas and values lying in the consciousness of people; a stratum of actions being the objectivised expression of that sphere, a stratum of creations of such activities or other objects becoming the objects of cultural actions”. (Kłoskowska, 1991, pp. 23–24). Culture is composed of different elements: behaviours, creations, and ideas. The first two are empirical, observable or interpersonal. The third one is intra-personal, mental, psychological; we can observe only its effects through behaviours and creations. So, in the first, operational, definition, its author pays most attention to behaviours, in the second, the focus is on all aspects and the essence of culture.

## 1.2. Division of the field of culture

In the large field of anthropological culture A. Kłoskowska distinguishes three specific areas: culture of existence, societal culture, symbolic culture.

In the first area, also called material culture or culture of civilisation (in Polish – *kultura bytu*), we can place these tools of production and products for consumption which have instrumental, practical and useful character. They must be produced and remade, because they wear out. The notion of progress can be employed to this sphere of technique. The mainly material character of culture of existence does not exclude the use of signs, but allows them to play only an instrumental role. The example of such situation is an instruction how to use a tool or how to make a cake.

The second area, societal culture (in Polish – *kultura socjetalna*), organises relations between members of society through legal, state and other kinds of regulations in social relationships. Regardless of this instrumental use of signs (like a civil or penal code) it creates a “residuum zone” – a real force like courts, police, prisons, to assure respect of these values and to keep society in order.

The third area, symbolic culture (in Polish – *kultura symboliczna*), is characterised by the use of signs in non-instrumental aims, which is called

“autothelic” (in Greek : *auto* – for, by yourself, *telos* – aim). The signs and symbols in language, art, religion, science, entertainment and games are used mainly as values in themselves, not for other aims. Paradoxically, all symbolic spheres can have both autothelic and instrumental aspect. We can study art for pleasure to have contact with beauty or we can decorate our flats with pictures we admire. But we can also collect pictures and others artistic objects because of their economic value or social prestige they can give us. An artist can make “art for the sake of art” or as a job. In the first case, he tries to invent something original, new and splendid, belonging to the avant-garde, in the second, he must produce “a kitsch”, loved by mass public ready to buy it. In religion, we can adore God (an autothelic attitude) or ask him in a prayer for a favour in this or in the other life (an instrumental attitude). Language of poetry is used for pleasure and contact with beauty, but in all other circumstances of communication it has an instrumental role. Entertainment and games have, by definition, only the autothelic character. When we are forced to play, we participate in a game by obligation, and this is not a free, voluntary and spontaneous activity, which fact was emphasised by Johan Huizinga (1967) and Roger Caillois (1973). Thus a game is a perfect example of symbolic culture.

As mentioned before, symbolic culture is a restricted sphere of culture, close to “spiritual culture”. Culture of existence was a synonym for “material culture” or civilisation. We can also encounter other relations between these notions. Culture and civilisation can have the same connotation, especially in different languages: French most often uses the term *civilisation*, German – *kultur*. The Polish word *kultura* means both. In the evolutionist theory, culture is the widest term, and civilisation a restricted one, being the last and the best, the most developed stage of human culture, following the stage of wilderness and that of barbarianism. In numerous theories on the crisis of culture, civilisation is still the last, even though the worst stage of culture. In historical and geographical studies, culture has a local or national character, and the character of civilisation is global, linking a few cultures at the same level of development. So we have the civilisation of Indians of vast prairies, the civilisation of Latin Americans, the civilisation of inhabitants of Mediterranean Sea etc.

## 2. Culture as communication

### 2.1. Three systems of cultural transmission

Culture is connected with society, because it exists thanks to and for its people. This relation is shown in an elementary model of communication:

Author/Sender – Work of Art/Message – Public/Receiver

The first terms better describe communication in the arts, the second – in mass media. In numerous theories this elementary chart is developed in order to present other types of relations with primary and secondary groups, leaders of opinion, political and technical domains. I would like to present only one example by a Czech structuralist Roman Jakobson who links six elements and functions: the expressive function is connected with the author or the sender, the cognitive function is connected with the receiver. The phatic function links both. In our everyday communication we have a lot of terms which do not give any information, but stimulate good relations between interlocutors. These are the classic formulas of the beginning and the end of conversations, like: “good morning”, “how are you”, “nice to see you”, “good bye”; as well as rhetorical questions like: “do you love me”, or terms: “darling”, “baby” etc. The representative function of communication emphasises the context. It is connected with the cognitive function and the attitude of the receiver who wants to get information about reality or study an object. When a code like language, artistic conventions and styles, are the objects of study, the metalinguistic function is realised. A work of art has mainly an aesthetic or poetic function, while both have autothelic character.

As it has been shown, culture has social frames. A. Kłoskowska (1972, 1980) distinguishes three frames of transmission of culture: the primary system, the institutional system and the mass media system, based on two main criteria. The first is a type of contact between the sender and the receiver, which may be direct, called “face to face interaction”, or indirect, when two interlocutors are separated in time and/or space. In the first case, the sender can use speech and gestures, which are transient forms of trans-



mission, in the second, transmission has to be recorded. The introduction of writing (in various forms) was a crucial moment in the history of culture. Later, at the end of the nineteenth century, the invention of electronic means of recording (radio, television) followed, and eventually, at the end of the twentieth century, the introduction of digital data recording (computers, internet). The second criterion is the formal or informal frame of contact between the sender and the receiver.

The first system, called primary, is characterised by direct and informal contact between interlocutors, like in a family, a group of colleagues or friends, or in primitive societies. The different examples show the possibility of applying this theory to diachronic historical study of these three systems of transmission of culture. It is primary in an ontological sense, that is in the life of a person who learns a mother tongue and behaviour in his/her family, as well in philogenetic sense, i.e. in the development of human society.

The second system, called institutional, is characterised by direct contact between the sender and the receiver, but realised in a frame of formal institutions, like churches, schools, theatres, opera houses, clubs etc. The roles of the sender are strictly distinguished and professional. Priests, teachers, actors, musicians transmit specialised knowledge to their public. The history of this kind of institutions begins in ancient times (church, school, theatre) and their development in European countries took place in the Middle Ages. The first European universities were established in England (Oxford, Cambridge), France (Sorbone in Paris, universities in Toulouse, Montpellier) and Italy (Bologna, Padua, Naples, Siena) in XII and XIII centuries. The first universities in Central Europe were created at the same time, in Prague in 1348, and in *Kraków* in 1364 (The Jagiellonian University). In contemporary societies, like in ancient times, most of these institutions are placed in towns and big cities. Their public consists mostly of educated people living in a spatial proximity, hence the name "elitist institutions". The problems of transformation of Polish cultural institutions and the problems of cultural participation of Polish society will be presented below. The system of cultural institutions is local (in this case it is called "the second system") and supra-local, having national or international level

(in this case it is called “the fourth system”). The best cultural institutions in each country belong to this fourth institutional system, like the Louvre Museum and the Opera House in Paris, the “La Scala” Opera House in Milan, the National Gallery in London, and some others.

The third cultural system is based on mass media like books, journals, cinema, radio, television, internet, named here in the order of their chronological appearance. The study of their history is a great topic of its own which cannot be discussed in this text, however. The visual forms of art presented in churches and cathedrals, especially the gothic forms of the Middle Ages, like sculptures, paintings, stained-glass windows, in which the lives of saints as well as scenes from the Old and the New Testament were presented, were called *Biblia pauperum*, that is Bible for the poor (illiterate) people. It is the first historical example of visual media, directed towards mass public. The mass media are called so, because they have a single or quantitatively limited sender and a large public, which is called “mass public”. For the most interesting and popular events presented on television it may be almost a whole national or international population. We can learn at once what happened in another part of the world, hence Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian scientist, called the contemporary world “a global village”. While describing two main criteria that characterise the system of transmission of culture, one must emphasise that the sender’s end is very formalised and submitted to control (especially political), but the receiver’s end is informal. The contact of the sender and the receiver is indirect, but all media try to introduce some elements of more natural and direct contact. That is why most magazines have a column called “letters from our readers” with replies by journalists, and television presenters smile to their viewers and talk to them as if they were in their homes (“nice to meet you this evening”, “I’m glad that you are spending this evening with us” etc.). The system of mass media is more accessible and democratic than the institutional system. It does not create intellectual, economic and spatial barriers. In order to be truly popular, it uses a lot of pictures and not too complicated language, adapted to the level of primary school graduates, basic education of a large public. It links informational and distractive functions. Problems of publicity and

advertising, propaganda, and manipulation are connected mostly with the system of mass media.

These three systems can be analysed diachronically, by order of chronological appearance, and synchronically, in their co-existence in contemporary societies.

## **2.2. Cultural activeness of Polish society**

Real cultural competence is based on cultural participation in the institutional system. As mentioned above, theatres, opera houses, cinemas, clubs and libraries are not evenly distributed on the territory of a nation, which fact creates spatial barriers to participation. To be correctly understood and adequately admired, these institutions require further education at the level of secondary school. The two facts have been of great importance, always and everywhere. Recently, in Poland, an economic barrier is observed regarding cultural participation. The great political, economical and social transformation that began in 1989 causes great unemployment and impoverishment of the Polish society.

A new social category of “the new poor” has become visible, equaling about 40% of all population. By social standards these are ordinary people, families with one or two children, where one or two parents have a low-paying job or where one or both are unemployed. They are not able to cover the cost of living (rent, electricity, gas, food). In comparison, the category of “the old poor” comprising the dregs of society, the old, the ill and the lonely, equaled around 10% both in the times of the Polish Peoples’ Republic and in the interwar period. “The new poor” are people who bear the brunt of the transformation most. They cannot afford any expenditures on culture. A cinema ticket costs more than the daily cost of living, a trip to the cinema for a family of four means spending half of the average monthly income. The same explanation applies to other cultural institutions. Detailed data on the participation of Polish society in the second system of culture, including the diversity resulting from the interaction of the main independent variables are given in tables 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1**  
**Place of living and participation in the second system of culture**

Artistic institution	Attendance in%		
	Total	Attendants living in cities	Attendants living in villages
Theatre	15	22	6
Operetta	6	8	2
Opera	4	4	13
Philharmonic	7	11	1
Museum	23	29	3
Art galleries	13	19	5

**Source:** M. Falkowska, (1992). *Zarys zmian w życiu kulturalnym Polaków*. In: M. Grabowska (ed.), *Barometr kultury*, Warszawa.

**Table 2**  
**Level of education and participation in the second system of culture**

Artistic institution	Attendance in%				
	Total	Primary education	Professional schools graduates	Secondary education	Higher education
Theatre	15	7	9	22	42
Operetta	6	4	3	8	13
Opera	4	3	2	5	9
Philharmonic	7	3	3	12	20
Museum	23	12	18	29	53
Art galleries	13	7	9	15	37

**Source:** M. Falkowska, (1992). *Zarys zmian w życiu kulturalnym Polaków*. In: M. Grabowska (ed.), *Barometr kultury*, Warszawa.

Table 3

## Living conditions and participation in the second system of culture

Artistic institution	Attendance in%			
	Total	Very difficult living conditions	Rather difficult living conditions	Easy living conditions
Theatre	15	7	13	23
Operetta	6	4	5	8
Opera	4	2	2	7
Philharmonic	7	5	5	12
Museum	23	13	22	28
Art galleries	13	14	23	53

**Source:** M. Falkowska, (1992). *Zarys zmian w życiu kulturalnym Polaków*. In: M. Grabowska (ed.), *Barometr kultury*, Warszawa.

In a nutshell, the cultural participation of the Polish society can be represented on a triangular chart. Its base is the level of mass culture, concentrated around TV, radio, newspapers, and media having 60 to 90% recipients among the whole population. The medium level gathers 35 to 60% recipients interested in film and literature. The top, elitist level of 10 to 25% of the population are people who visit theatres, opera houses, museums and art galleries. The relatively high position of museums, enticing 23% of the population is interesting in comparison to the very small public of opera viewers (4%). It does not, in any way, mean mass interest for fine arts and lack of favour of music. This phenomenon has been called “the holiday museum syndrom”. Visiting museums during holidays and time free of work is common, regardless of their rank. It can be the museums of the fourth system, such as the Louvre, Prado or the National Gallery, and regional museums of the second system, which are of lower rank. At the same time, it is common not to visit museums, even those most renowned, which are in the direct neighbourhood of our places of residence. In both cases the lifestyle is the decisive factor: at home we work and we do not have to worry that a museum will perish; there will always

be time to visit it, but during holidays, we have more leisure time and we feel obliged to take the opportunity. This phenomenon has been described for the first time by a renowned French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1962) researching the visitors of museums in France, Greece, The Netherlands and Poland.

It is worthwhile to present the criteria of participation, as they are not identical in cases of various media and artistic institutions. People who were to a play at least once during the past year can be called theatre spectators. To be considered a reader you have to read a book every two months. "How many hours a day do you watch TV?" is the question we direct to television viewers. The figures given are to be interpreted in the context of intensity of cultural participation. As statistical and sociological studies show, the situation in Poland is not much different from that of other European countries. Some differences may concern specific public or auditoria, but not the division of public between the three levels mentioned above.

So, in Poland, only 25% of population can be considered to participate in cultural events. That means that 75% are excluded from culture! Some factors influencing cultural exclusion can be mentioned, such as lower level of education and cultural competence, difficult life conditions, countryside as a place of habitation (far away from cultural institutions). The symptoms of exclusion can be divided into objective and subjective. The first category includes economic and lifestyle indicators. In general, these are limited expenses for culture, education, and also a long distance from artistic institutions (including elitist institutions like theatres and the popular ones like cinemas). Between 1980 and 1996 the number of spectators decreased twice (from 250 to 150 out of 1000 inhabitants, and six times in case of movies (from 3000 to 500 out of 10 000 inhabitants). At the same time the phenomenon of home centered culture (video, tv-movies and television in general) is observed. This attitude, regardless of its reasons is called cultural passiveness. Subjective factors include limitation of cultural needs and aspirations, and also acceptance for one's own weak cultural participation. These personal feelings are heightened

by the prevailing mood of the society, connected with, in this case justified, nostalgia for the past. In the considerable part of the society there is a sustained tendency to expect help in organising and financing cultural participation. One third of the population would like retention of such practices as organised trips or partial payment of cinema and theatre tickets by the company or government. At the same time, the prestige of culture and cultural participation decreases in comparison to other, both material and spiritual, values.

The statistical data presented in table 4 show the number of cultural institutions in Poland, the region of Łódź and the city of Łódź, as well as the number of their attendants.

Table 4

**Cultural institutions in Łódź and the region and number of their attendance**

Institutions and attendance in 2001	Number of attendants		
	Poland	Region of Łódź	Łódź
<b>Libraries</b>	88 000	590	210
Number of readers (in millions)	7.4	0.474	0.142
<b>Theatres and music institutions</b>	180	13	16
Viewers & listeners (in millions)	10.1	0.593	0.523
<b>Movies</b>	661	44	14
Viewers (in millions)	27.6	1.69	1.21
<b>Museums</b>	656	41	10
Visitors (in millions)	15.1	0.541	0.215
<b>Galleries</b>	256	22	17
Visitors (in millions)	2.6	0.190	0.154

**Source:** *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2002*, GUS, Warszawa 2002; *Rocznik Statystyczny Województwa Łódzkiego*, 2002, Urząd Statystyczny Łódź, Łódź 2002; *Statystyka Łodzi*, Urząd Statystyczny Łódź, Łódź 2002.

### 3. Nation and national culture

#### 3.1. The theory of nation

The notion of “nation” derives from the Latin word *natio*, and *natio* itself derives from *nascere* – which means “to give birth”. This etymology, which in fact is identical in many other European languages, finds reflection in the common concepts of nation as a natural event based on the community of origin and the community of land. The statutory solutions legitimize these concepts by granting nationality on the basis of “the blood right” (*ius sanguinis*) and “the land right” (*ius soli*), deriving from birth or long term residence on a given territory.

Issues concerning the nation and national culture are of considerable significance in the Polish sociological literature, both in the works of classical authors in the field of sociology, such as Florian Znaniecki (1952), Stanisław Ossowski (1984), Antonina Kłoskowska (1996), and in the empirical investigations of contemporary researchers. Polish sociologists are not isolated in their research; the list of European and American historians, sociologists, anthropologists and political researchers concentrating on these issues is a long one. However, there is no unanimity in regard to the origin of nation and its character among these scientists.

Some philosophers, historians, politicians (especially those whose work date from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Geller, Greenfiels, Tilly, Hobsbawm, Bardach), accentuate political functions of a nation as “an ethnically diversified community subordinate to one nation, the administrative politics which leads to gradual unification in the sphere of culture”. (Bardach, 1993, cited after Kłoskowska, 1996). This view focuses on the phase of existence of a nation that formed on the basis of historical and cultural community and whose members’ awareness of its autonomy results in the demands for political autonomy, which in turn leads to the creation of an independent country.

The anthropological and political approaches (represented by Anderson, Armstrong, Deutsch, Naroll, Ossowski, Smith, Zientara, Tilly, Znaniecki) focus on the relations between the forming countries and their ethnic basis. This allows one to analyse both the genesis of a nation as



the most sophisticated form of ethnic as well as territorial community, (ethnic group, tribe, people, nation) and the peculiarity of national Minorities within bigger societies and the acculturations and assimilations they are exposed to. Characterizing the so called "culture unit", that is an ethnic group or a small local community as the smallest entity used when researching societies (especially primeval), Raoul Naroll (cited after Kłoskowska, 1996) gave ten criteria that are the basis of its identification, e.g. The continuity of territory, political organisation, language, name, common history, common culture, ecological adjustment. The theme of numerous elements of culture, which contribute to the specific entirety of national culture is also investigated by other researchers. There are many objective and subjective elements of nation, which at the same time are the factors for its genesis and development. The important factors are common territory, history, tradition and economy. This list is not comprehensive, and none of the factors is a condition necessary or sufficient for the existence of a country. There have been nations living in Diaspora (the Jews), nations divided into different countries or being under control of some other country (i.e. Poland, Greece, nations of the former Soviet Union, Kurds), biand multilingual nations (Belgium, Switzerland, India), nations of coexisting religions. Karl Deutsch (cited after Kłoskowska, 1996) calls these different elements "blocks of culture", C. Geertz (cited after Kłoskowska, 1996) arranges them into functional entireties using the "dense description" method. A. Kłoskowska (1996) points out that while the blocks belonging to the peripheral elements of a given culture are replacable, the central elements, called the core values, stay unchanged. The core values balance the shortcomings concerning other elements important to the nation. In case of Poland, the lack of national entity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was balanced by the religious and cultural bond. The term "a Pole – a catholic", which comes from that period, characterizes national bonds, especially in the situation when the neighbouring countries are of different religion: the protestant Germany, and the orthodox Russians. The nation is understood here as a social and cultural community, with institutions independent of the country. Examples from the history of Poland from the times of the partitions, or the activity of "Solidarity" from the times of the Polish People's Republic, illustrate the legitimacy of this thesis. F. Znaniecki (1952) has

also advocated this thesis, opting for the culturalist view of the nation and supporting it by the role of cultural institutions in the genesis of a nation (writers, artists, musicians, national ideologists, historians, ethnographers, professionals and their associations) as subjects creating a nation. The author did not limit his concept to the case of Poland, but also included the history of Greece, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Serbia, showing that the community of culture is more permanent than the government (often being the oppressive tool of a foreign country).

The historical perspective in the research of a nation is not uniform. Some people connect the genesis of contemporary nations with the industrial revolution (a viewpoint correlated with the political view on the nation), others with former periods in history (a viewpoint correlated with the culturalist view on the nation). The evidence for the crystallisation of national awareness in France, Germany and the Czech Republic was found as early as in the eleventh and twelfth century. The indicators of this awareness were e.g.: distinguishing the king, who was the authority, from the nation and the so-called "linguistic nationalism". Taking into consideration wider temporal frames for the analysis of the genesis of nations does not at all mean identifying the Middle Ages or the Renaissance form of nation with the ones formed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In conclusion we can quote the most general thesis by E. Hall, saying that "a universal theory of nationalism cannot be formulated" (Hall, 1993, cited after Kłoskowska, 1996) and also the preliminary definition by A. Kłoskowska: "The nation is seen here as a large community of people connected by a community of culture, facilitating mutual agreement and unification of its members" (Kłoskowska, 1996, p. 8). Altogether, and in reciprocal relations, we define three Major notions: nation, the national culture, and the national identification.

Numerous terms characterize attitudes towards one's own culture as well as towards other cultures and consider the positive and the negative aspects of these attitudes. The term "patriotism", meaning the love for one's country and one's nation, along with the readiness for sacrifices in its name, has positive connotations. At the same time patriotism does not negate other countries' laws and respects them (*Słownik wyrazów obcych*, 1980, p. 730). However, the terms nationalism, chauvinism, ethnocen-

trism, xenophobia, and racism have negative connotations. Nationalism is an ideology and politics subordinating everything to the best interest for one's own country, demanding special privileges for it, discriminating other countries (or national Minorities), often in an aggressive manner (ibidem, p. 655). Chauvinism is an extreme, full of hatred form of nationalism. Xenophobia is an aversion or enmity towards foreigners and for the foreign. (ibidem, p. 540). Authors of the series "Xenophobe's guide to..." explain xenophobia as an irrational fear of foreigners, probably justified, always understandable. Ethnocentrism is simply concentrating on one's own nation, not connected with xenophobic dislike for the foreign. The most extreme and negative phenomenon is racism, which is a set of beliefs in the allegedly unevenbiological as well as intellectual and social value of the human races. It combines with the faith in the supremacy of one race and its right to rule all others. Racist theories have been discredited in science and politics. As an outstanding English philosopher Bertrand Russell stated, the only common feature of all the racist theories is the belief in the supremacy of the race to which the author of the theory belongs.

### 3.2. National culture and its canon

A. Kłoskowska formulates the following definition of national culture: "A set of ways of acting, norms, values, symbols, beliefs, knowledge and symbolic works, which by some community is regarded as its own, dedicated to it, grown up from its traditions and historical experiences and valid on its territory". (Kłoskowska, 1996, p. 37). The author emphasises that the national culture has a syntagmatic character. She puts together all different elements and systems to create a specific and homogeneous system. The most important paradigms taken into consideration by the construction of the national culture are: language, literature, art, religion, customs, symbols, tradition.

National culture is a common treasure for the society and knowledge of it is obligatory for the members of the nation. The knowledge of national culture, and especially of its canon, in connection with an attitude towards it, is characterized by A. Kłoskowska (1996) as cultural valence.

The author distinguished four kinds of cultural valence, taking into consideration knowledge and attachment to one culture (univalence), to two cultures (bivalence, a term analogous to “bilingualism”), to several cultures (polyvalence), and lack of knowledge of any culture (ambivalence). Cultural valence would be an objective indicator of membership of a given nation. It is worth underlining that national culture does not exist in a void, but is surrounded by other national cultures, towards which positive stances (the sphere of universalization), or negative stances (the sphere of ignorance and rejection) can be taken. Polyvalence is situated in the sphere of universalisation. A perfect knowledge of the culture of Poland, Russia, Germany and France was possessed by a Polish artist Józef Czapski, whose complex biography is presented by A. Kłoskowska (1996) in a chapter entitled *Joseph Czapski: Polish Identification and Cultural Polymorphism*”.

Cultural ambivalence, deriving from lack of education, hardships of life and migratory complications, is not a common phenomenon, not even in the situations on the borders of cultures. It is, however, a social and individual problem. Cultural univalence, in connection with the feeling of duty for the culture of one’s own nation, is the norm. Nevertheless, not all the members of a given nation, even those most educated and patriotic, happen to have a considerably broad knowledge of all their national culture. That is why a separate part of national culture has been distinguished, which, as the most significant, is to be known to every member of a community and is to be a bondcreating feature. It is the canon of national culture passed on by family, school, and media. This canon is composed of facts, names, poems, paintings, songs etc.

This canon is rather permanent, but it also changes from time to time. These changes are connected with the new artistic successes of national poets, writers and musicians. For example, two Polish poets received the Nobel Prize in literature recently: *Czesław Miłosz* in 1980, and *Wisława Szymborska* in 1997, so they became important for national culture and their works will be taught at schools. This is a typical, progressive situation.

But a canon can change quickly and it can change a lot. It is a symptom of important political, economical and social changes in a society. It was similar in the case of all the great revolutions, the French at the end

of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the introduction of the communist system and ideas in Eastern Europe after the World War II and its end in 1989. All schoolbooks on Polish literature and history were changed after 1945, and later after 1989.

Other problems are connected with social structure and the organisation of the system of education. Two sociologists, from both sides of the English Channel showed it clearly: a Frenchman, Pierre Bourdieu, and an Englishman, Basil Bernstein. The first deals with the construction of national canon on the basis of a specific culture of high society, which he calls “the legal culture of dominant classes”. These are poems, novels, paintings, music works, foreign languages, and philosophy. All popular class culture, like folk music, dance, fine arts are not taught at school. B. Bernstein shows that teaching at school is realised in a specific language – “the formal code”, typical for children from upper and middle classes. There is a completely new and different language for children from lower classes, who at home use “the limited code”. They have two kinds of difficulties at school: the linguistic and the content–related. Success at school and a school diploma are the necessary conditions for social promotion. So the system of education in well-developed European countries is apparently democratic, because it is organised on the basis of principles of high society. It allows reproducing a society from generation to generation. There is a very simple indicator which shows a perfect social reproduction by a strong correlation of level of education of grand father, father and son. In France there was a small probability that a son of a worker would begin and attain higher education, especially in very prestigious faculties of law or medicine; the degree of probability of such studies was about 3% for a boy and 1% for a girl. That means that national culture and its canon can be contested “from the bottom”.

But they are contested too “from the top” by artists and scientists of the avant-garde. They often emphasise other values: international, modernist, counter-cultural, postmodernist etc. A renowned Polish 20<sup>th</sup> century writer, *Witold Gombrowicz*, contested Polish national culture.

National culture has a great enemy, namely, popular mass culture. Independently of the existence of national stars and specific national folk musicians, popular culture is more a fruit of “globalisation”.

Any national culture cannot be isolated from other cultures. Processes of diffusion and cultural exchange are normal and necessary for cultural development. Some Poles admire Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and the Beatles very much, but also like Chopin and feel him more familiar, closer to their own experience.

### 3.3. National identity

The conception proposed by the renowned Polish sociologist Stanisław Ossowski is widely accepted in the scientific milieu and well adapted to explain collected data as well as personal experiences.

He distinguished two types of national links and two types of homelands:

1. The habitual link (in Polish *wieź nawykowa*, in French *le lien habituel*) is founded on one's own experience and concerns one's "small country", "private country", "homeland". Everybody knows his village or town, his region, regional language or dialect, customs, food, art etc., and likes them because they are his own.

2. The ideological link (in Polish *wieź ideologiczna*, in French *le lien ideologique*) is founded on a reflexive, intellectual, conscious attachment to national culture, values and territory of one's nation. It is not a close relationship in terms of territory, place of birth or the place where childhood is spent, but the country and the nation as a whole. It is one's ideological country, one's native country.

Nobody can pretend to know the whole country by his own experience, especially if it is a big country like Poland, France, Spain or Italy, or very big like the USA or Russia, not a small one like Monaco or Luxembourg. But there are some methods to construct and to establish a link with the country and make it more personal. Domestic tourism, during holidays or school times, is one of the best. Children visit the capital of their country, other important places and historical monuments. Another visual way to show a country is a map with boundaries and the neighbouring countries. Maps are used sometimes for political and ideological aims, so they are often inadequate. Such was the case of a map of Poland presented in German schoolbooks between 1945 and 1970, showing boundaries from

1939. The situation changed after a political agreement between Poland and Germany in the seventies. The national culture is an intellectual and affective way to create ideological links with one's country. In the Polish situation, the role of national culture and catholic religion was very important, because once the map did not show Poland at all. Between 1795 and 1918 there was no Polish independent state, the country was divided into three partitions between the three neighbouring empires: Russian, Prussian and Austrian. Foreign enemies fought against Polish upheavals and against Polish culture considered dangerous from their point of view, because it made it hard to diminish Polish peoples' feeling for their national identity. Many artists, priests, and teachers were killed, imprisoned or sent to Siberia. A similar situation occurred during the World War II with oppression from both the German and the Soviet state.

Another famous Polish sociologist, Florian Znaniecki (1952) discussed the spread of national consciousness and solidarity, using examples from history of many nations, not just the Poles. Two methods were used: propaganda and education. In contrast to careful, but long-termed education, propaganda, though not perfect, brings the desired results quickly. Both methods used four basic socio-techniques of national acculturation: the cult of heroes, myths of common descent and racial unity, attachment to the native land as the possession of a group, and the appeal for united defense against a common enemy.

"A hero impersonates the most important values of a social group, and his continuous glorification contributes to the maintenance of group solidarity" – explained Znaniecki (1952, p. 83). He distinguished four types of national heroes, types we can easily find examples of in each national culture canon. First are the legendary folk heroes, famous figures in stories or poetry. Then are the religious heroes – saints whose cult is endorsed by the Church. Third, we have great kings and warriors whose cult was initiated by political groups. Eventually, a relatively new type – cultural heroes: scientists, artists, writers, and all kinds of creative geniuses appear. (Znaniecki, 1952, p. 83).

A person can have more then one homeland and more then one country. Here are some examples.

First is the case of a homeland – “small, private country”. One can be attached to the place of his birth, the place where he spent his childhood, the place where he studied, or the place where he used to spend his holidays, and feel that this territory belongs to him in a way. He says: “it’s mine”, “it’s ours”, “in my village we used to...” These “private homelands” can be situated in different countries or states. It is the case of people who traveled a lot or lived in different countries because of family situation, work or political reasons. We can find both historical and contemporary examples. Władysław Mickiewicz, a son of the greatest Polish romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, spent all his life outside Poland, especially in Paris. So his homeland was Paris, his country – France and Poland. The great poet himself, Adam had his homeland in the region of Wilno in Lithuania, and in Paris too. Being an exile, he taught Slavic literature at College de France in Paris. In Paris he wrote splendid poems about his homeland and his country.

*Litwo, ojczyzno moja, ty jesteś jak zdrowie.  
Ile cię trzeba cenić, ten tylko się dowie  
Kto cię stracił. Dziś piękność twą w całej twojej ozdobie  
Widzę i opisuję, bo tęsknię po tobie.*

*Lithuania, my country thou are like health.  
How much thou shouldst be prized only he can learn,  
Who has lost thee. To-day thy beauty in all its splendor  
I see and describe, for I yearn for thee.*<sup>3</sup>

(Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz*, Inwokacja)

A person can have more than one country as an ideological country. This situation is called by A. Kłoskowska (1996) “the double national identification”, in opposition to the most common situation of “the integral national identification” concerning one country. The first country may be the one of one’s parents’ origins, the second the country where a per-

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by George Rapall Noyes (1930), J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London.



son lives, works or wants to stay. More than two “loved countries” create a “cosmopolitan identification”. In some situations, due to complicated biography and lack of education, one cannot be sure of his national identification (“I don’t know whom I am”). National identification is an answer to the question: “Who am I?”, given by yourself, or to the question: “Who are you?” given by others in different situations (administrative, cultural, tourist...).

These issues were the subject of A. Kłoskowska’s research, based on biographical interviews being much of case studies with the representatives of national Minorities: Belarusians, Ukrainians, Germans from the territory of Silesia, and young Poles from the centre of the country, as the representatives of the dominating culture (Kłoskowska, 1996). In the years 1992–1994, the author collected seventy interviews recorded on tape and then accurately rewritten, which gave over three thousand pages of data. It was the basis of qualitative studies of issues concerning the knowledge of national culture (the already discussed notion of cultural valence) and national identification. Whereas the cultural valence could be an objective indicator of national membership, the national identification would be a subjective one. The studies of biographies and autobiographies of people, focused on their connections with culture (or cultures) and nation (or nations) are, according to Kłoskowska, described as “searching for the roots of the national culture”, existing in actions and experiences of people. The theoretical and empirical relationship between these two variables is shown in table 5. In the table two stars indicate cases confirmed in the collected data, one star indicates possible cases, and a blank space indicates logically impossible relations.

The young generation of Poles from the centre of the country proved to have an integral Polish national identification and was characterised by cultural univalence, which applied to the Polish culture, of course. The situation of the people from the national and cultural borders of our country was more complex though. The national identification of the researched Silesians was not uniform, and situated itself on the Polish-German continuum, with respect to various categories accentuating the ideological nation/nations (Poland, Germany), and/or their local nation: a Pole, a Silesian,

**Table 5**  
**National identification and national culture valence**

National identification	Culture Valence			
	Univalence	Bivalence	Ambivalence	Polyvalence
Integral	1 **	2 **	3	4 **
Double	5	6	7	8
Problematic	9 **	10 *	11 *	12 *
Cosmopolitan	13	14 **	13 *	16 *

\*\* – situation confirmed by collected data

\* – situation not confirmed by collected data, but possible

– without star – situation logically impossible.

**Source:** A. Kłoskowska (1996). *Kultury narodowe u korzeni*. Warszawa, p. 129.

a Silesian Pole, a Silesian, neither a German nor a Pole, a German and a Pole, a Polish German, a Silesian German, a German. National identifications of Belarusians applied to the local homeland, the land of Białystok, and to the three ideological homelands: Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, and also to the Orthodox Church. The following responses, being proofs of univalence, bivalence and ambivalence, appeared in the group researched by Kłoskowska: a Belarusian, a maybe Belarusian, an orthodox Belarusian, a Belarusian and a Pole, a maybe Pole, a Ukrainian. In the studies of A. Sadowski (1997), the situation of orthodox Poles appeared most difficult, marginalised by the two “model” populations: catholic Poles and orthodox Belarusians: a Pole, an orthodox Pole, a Pole of the orthodox religion, a Pole of the orthodox origin, a Pole of Belarusian origin, a Pole-citizen of Poland. In the group of the Ukrainian Minority, born and living in Poland, the affirmation of the “Ukrainity” was strong, as well as with underlining of Ukrainian nationality and Polish citizenship (a Polish Ukrainian, an Ukrainian from Poland), and with occasional ambivalence (“How

much am I Polish, how much am I Ukrainian?”). However, there was no Ukrainian of uniform Polish identification.

Uncertainty concerning national identification, often accompanied by ambivalence, is a situation hard to bear for an individual, similar to uncertainty of origin, family, sex or name. Cultural bivalence and polyvalence alongside with double national identification or a cosmopolitan attitude enrich an individual's personality. They form the basis for “openness” to other nations and other national cultures. It does not mean that cultural univalence and uniform cultural identification are correlated with being isolated from other cultures and nations. Recent studies on national affinity and antipathy in different countries show the existence of spheres of universalisation and alienation, marked in the schema by A. Kłoskowska describing the national culture. In conclusion of her book, the author writes: “In view of the present study, personal intercultural contacts and intercommunication alone are no omnipotent means able to eliminate the dangers of nationalism based on the conflict of actual practical interests, but they may contribute to the attenuation of xenophobia flowing from historical tradition and they may prevent the totalisation of conflicts”. (Kłoskowska, 1996, p. 468.)

Participating in the Erasmus part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, we are actively involved in the process of overcoming xenophobia and building “open nations”.